

Civic Center Landscape Architects

Thomas Dolliver Church



Thomas D. Church (1902-1978), born in Boston and raised in California, was trained at the University of California at Berkeley and the Harvard Graduate School of Design. He taught briefly before opening a practice in San Francisco in 1933, where he worked until his retirement in 1977. The War Memorial Court (Landmark #84) in Civic Center is an early example of Church's design work. His most notable landscape designs include the Donnell Garden (Sonoma, CA), Parkmerced (San Francisco, Ca), Bloedel Reserve (Bainbridge Island, WA), and General Motors Technical Center (Warren, MI). Church mentored many renowned landscape architects in the Bay Area and two of his employees, Douglas Baylis and Lawrence Halprin, would continue in his legacy in Civic Center in particular.



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Church designed the War Memorial Court in 1936 between the Veterans' Building and the Opera House, completing the War Memorial Complex



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The War Memorial Court contains soils from various cities around the world where American battles have been fought.

In 1955, Church authored *Gardens are For People* in which he outlined the four major tenets of his design philosophy: **unity**, which is the consideration of the schemes as a whole, for both architecture and landscape; **function**, which is the relationship of practical service areas to the needs of the house, and the relationship of decorative areas to the desires and pleasures of those who use the space; **simplicity**, both in terms of the economic and aesthetic success of the layout; and **scale**, which rests upon the pleasant relationship of elements to each other.

Charles A. Birnbaum and Stephanie S. Foell, eds, *Shaping the American Landscape*, Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009.
The Cultural Landscape Foundation, "Thomas Dolliver Church," <<http://tclf.org/pioneer/thomas-church>> August 29, 2013.



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Douglas Baylis



Douglas Baylis (1915-1971), well known for both his landscape designs and his writings on gardening, spent his career in the San Francisco Bay Area. After completing his studies at the University of California at Berkeley, Baylis worked under Thomas D. Church before establishing his own practice in 1945. With his illustrator wife, Maggie Baylis, he ushered in a new era of “how-to” garden writing, publishing in journals and magazines such as *Landscape Architecture*, *House Beautiful*, and *Better Homes and Gardens*. He is known as one of the founders of the “California School” of modern landscape architecture.



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After the construction of the underground Brooks Hall and Civic Center Garage, Civic Center Plaza was redesigned by Douglas Baylis in 1961.



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In front of the 1994 children's playground at Civic Center Plaza are a Princess Flower shrub and two olive trees that were planted in 1961.

In addition to Civic Center Plaza, some of Baylis's most notable public design works include Washington Square (Landmark #226) in San Francisco, IBM Headquarters in San Jose, and the Unit House in Hayward, California. He also served as consulting landscape architect for UC Berkeley in the late 1950s. He served on the San Francisco Art Commission from 1948-1953 and he was honored as an American Society of Landscape Architects Fellow in 1966.

The Cultural Landscape Foundation, “Douglas Baylis,” <<https://tclf.org/pioneer/douglas-baylis>> August 29, 2013.

James W. Haas, “Civic Center in the Post-war Years,” *Argonaut* 23, no 1 (Spring 2012): 66-88.

UC Berkeley, Environmental Design Archives, “Baylis, Douglas and Maggie,” <<http://archives.ced.berkeley.edu/collections/baylis-douglas-and-maggie>> June 30, 2014.



Lawrence Halprin

Lawrence Halprin (1916-2009) was an influential landscape architect and theorist whose career spanned nearly 65 years until his death at the age of 93. Halprin was born in Brooklyn, New York in 1916 and moved to San Francisco after World War II. He worked for Thomas Church's office from 1945 until opening his own practice in 1949. He authored nine books on landscape theory and design. His most notable works include: Sea Ranch site plan in Sonoma County (1962-1967), renovation of Ghirardelli Square in San Francisco (1962-1968, Larkmark #30), Portland Open-Space Sequence (1965- 1978), Freeway Park in Seattle (1970-1974), Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial in Washington, D.C. (1976-1997), and numerous residential gardens, campus master plans, and civic and institutional projects in the United States and abroad.



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Halprin designed United Nations Plaza in 1975 to commemorate the founding of the United Nations at the War Memorial Complex in 1945.



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UN Plaza Fountain, with associated lighting and paving treatments, anchors the eastern portion of UN Plaza.

Halprin's urban designs focused on the role of the landscape architect in reshaping the American city during the urban renewal efforts of the mid to late 20th Century. Halprin understood his designs as inseparable from the social, cultural and natural contexts in which his projects were located. Halprin received much recognition for his work during his lifetime, including such honors as the AIA Medal for Allied Professionals in 1964, the ASLA gold medal in 1978, the Presidential Design Award for the FDR Memorial in 2000, and the National Medal of the Arts in 2002.

Charles Birnbaum and Stephanie Foell, *Shaping the American Landscape: New Profiles from the Pioneers of American Landscape Design Project*, (University of Virginia Press, 2009), 124-127.

John King, "Lawrence Halprin-landscape architect-dies," *San Francisco Chronicle*, October 27, 2009. <http://www.sfgate.com/news/article/Lawrence-Halprin-landscape-architect-dies-3212769.php>

Lyndon, Donlyn, "Lawrence Halprin, 1916-2009," Design Observer Group, October 30, 2009. <http://places.designobserver.com/feature/lawrence-halprin-1916-2009/11617/>

